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RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 3839
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PAKISTAN / TALIBAN, SRI LANKA
UNREST, U.S.-CUBA RELATIONS, U.S.ECONOMY; NEW DELHI.

This countrywide cable reports on relevant media reaction/opinion from India's large non-English press. The Mission reports on English-language media via email through the daily "Early Edition" summary.

PAKISTAN / TALIBAN

1. "WE TOO HAVE TO FIGHT THE TALIBAN," op-ed in April 23 right-of-center AMAR UJALA Hindi daily by columnist Kuldip Talwar: "The Pakistan government believes that the Sharia deal with the Taliban in the Swat Valley will strengthen peace in the country. The international community is, however, not so sure. The Pakistani government's stamp of legitimacy to the Taliban is a matter of concern to other nations. The global community is watching with unease the expanding reign of the Taliban in Pakistan. This could accentuate tensions between Pakistan and the U.S. Meanwhile, this rising fanaticism in our neighborhood is a big danger for India. The Taliban are inching closer and we need to be prepared."

2. "TALIBAN: AN INTERNATIONAL TERROR," editorial in the April 24 right-of-center Urdu daily HAMARA SAMAJ: "America is worried about the Taliban's presence near Islamabad. India also faces a threat, and is open to obtaining Israel's help in thwarting the Taliban. The Jewish lobby wants American strategic and financial support extended to India. According to the think tank

Council on Foreign Relations, the new generation of Taliban and Al Qaeda will have nuclear weapons and Pakistan will be their epicenter. The governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan lack the capability to control extremism and terrorism because they have limited resources, and the leadership and government institutions of both countries are too weak to thwart the impending danger."

¶3. "HILLARY'S WARNING," editorial in April 24 Kolkata independent ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA. "Hillary Clinton's warning clearly shows America's concern about Pakistan... she seems sorry that public opinion in Pakistan has yet to turn against their government's increasing surrender to the Taliban and Al Qaida. However, instead of helping Pakistan to strengthen its democratic institutions, the U.S. has always backed its military dictators. These leaders have received huge incentives from Washington for their loyalty, while they consolidated their position by supporting the jehadi forces through the ISI. So why cry about it now?"

SRI LANKA UNREST

¶4. "LAST SCUFFLE OF TAMIL TIGERS," editorial in the April 24 right-of-center Urdu daily HINDUSTAN EXPRESS: "Sri Lanka's war against the Tamil Tigers has reached its final and decisive phase. But the question is whether it

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is really the last struggle of the LTTE? That remains to be seen. It is possible that Prabhakaran could become untraceable, like Osama Bin Laden."

¶5. "LTTE NEARLY FINISHED" editorial in April 24 Guwahati Assamese left-of-center ASAMIYA PRATIDIN. "The LTTE's downfall is imminent, but conditions for Sri Lankan Tamils remains as they were nearly three decades ago. There was a time when the LTTE could have solved the problem through negotiation to secure the political interests of the Tamils. But it chose to reject the government's offer of self-rule. Now it has lost everything - public support, the sympathy of the international community, and its ability to fight against the Sri Lankan army..."

U.S.-CUBA RELATIONS

¶6. "U.S AND CUBA HEAD TOWARDS POSITIVE RELATIONS" op-ed article by columnist V D Ranade in the April 24 centrist daily NAVASHAKTI. "President Obama's bid to repair relations with Latin American countries, particularly estranged Cuba, is definitely a highlight of the recently-concluded fifth summit of the Americas. Acknowledging the presence of U.S. critics in the region, Obama did not just admit the need for a far more positive U.S. contribution in Latin America; he even said that the U.S. could learn a lesson from Cuba, which for decades has sent doctors to other Latin America countries to care for the poor. Obama presented a more all-inclusive agenda for Latin America than his predecessors, who focused on trade and counter-narcotics programs..."

¶7. "US-Cuba relations," editorial in April 24 left-of-center Kannada daily PRAJAVANI: "US President Obama's effort to extend a hand of friendship to Cuba, forgetting the bitter past, is truly laudable. The leaders of both the countries should waste no time in starting talks. Obama is taking steps to improve ties with Latin American countries. An improved relationship with Cuba would be a great achievement for the U.S."

U.S.ECONOMY

18. "Obama's War," editorial in April 24 pro-DMK Tamil daily DINAKARAN: "Following the hue and cry from credit card holders, President Obama has initiated strong action. Obama's plan includes providing more time to repay installments, reducing interest rates, and minimum ages for issuance of credit cards. While banks are opposing this move, Obama said that Americans are addicted to credit cards, and the government would come to their rescue.

BURLEIGH